

An Owner's Manual for:

PUPPY POINTERS:

TIPS FOR SELECTING A
CANINE COMPANION

by the
AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB



ABOUT THIS SERIES

At the AKC, we know better than anyone that your dog can't be treated like a car or an appliance, but we've named this series "An Owner's Manual" because sometimes you probably wish your lovable companions came with one.

These concise guides give you the tools, tips, and direction to be a responsible and confident dog owner who brings out the best in your dog. Give them a test drive!



Bringing home a puppy is a joyous event. First and foremost, they're incredibly cute. Has a human ever encountered a puppy without smiling? Of course not. But choosing a puppy is no laughing matter. Puppies grow – all too quickly – into dogs. So it's critically important to make informed decision about acquiring a puppy.



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ARE YOU READY?

Too frequently, common sense goes out the window when it comes to buying a puppy. This seems even more evident when the puppy is purchased by a family with young children. If you're living alone, are you prepared to feed, bathe, walk and play with your dog – every day? If you work late or are going out with friends every night, you're likely not ready to take on the responsibility of owning a dog. If you're welcoming a puppy into a family household, will there be a primary caregiver or will the family share such tasks as cleaning the puppy's accidents and ensuring that the water bowl is never empty. The bottom line: you or your family must be willing to devote the time and energy necessary to all but guarantee your dog's health and happiness.



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COST OF DOG OWNERSHIP

Think of the purchase price of your puppy as something akin to a down payment. There are plenty of expenses ahead. You will need to buy puppy supplies: a collar with identification, a leash, food and water bowls, food and treats, a dog bed (many owners recommend dog crates). The list goes on. Your puppy also will require visits to a veterinarian for such things as annual examinations and vaccinations. Evaluate your budget; ask yourself if you really can afford a dog. There is no doubt that a puppy is a cuddly bundle of joy, but it is also an expense.



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RESEARCH THE RIGHT BREED FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Is there a breed you have had your eye on, or are you confused about how to select a dog? In either case, you should do some homework to make sure that you select the right breed of dog for you and your family. The bonus of selecting a purebred dog is their predictability in size, coat, care requirements and temperament. Knowing what your cute puppy will look like and the kind of care he will need as an adult is a key in selecting the breed for you.



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Research will provide answers to some important questions:

- What is this breed's temperament like?
- How big will the dog get?
- How much exercise does the dog need?
- Does this breed bark a lot?
- Does this breed shed and how often will the dog need to be groomed?
- What are the best training methods for this dog?
- Does this breed do well with children?
- Does this breed do well with other pets?



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BREEDER SEARCH OPTIONS

The best way to ensure a long and happy relationship with a purebred dog is to purchase from a responsible breeder. In conjunction with the [AKC Marketplace](#) and other online resources, AKC recommends that you obtain referrals from:



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- **AKC Parent Clubs.** A parent club is a national organization that represents a breed recognized by the AKC. Each parent club owns and maintains the written standard for its breed and implements programs for the betterment of that breed. Parent clubs represent a wealth of breed knowledge and are an invaluable resource for prospective puppy buyers.
 - **Local Clubs.** You may also search for a local club to reach volunteers from all-breed or specialty clubs.
 - **Breed Rescue Groups.** These contacts can assist you with information about purebred rescue.



BREEDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Once you select a breeder, screen the breeder. You'll want to know long the person has been breeding dogs and whether he or she is a member of an AKC parent club or any other dog-related organizations. Does the breeder do health screenings prior to breeding a litter? Does the breeder show his or her dogs at AKC events?



Bronwyn Carlton ©AKC



Your breeder should be willing to answer all of your questions. He or she should also ask questions about you, your lifestyle, and your family. If a contact doesn't respond to your inquiries, or doesn't show any interest in the life the dog will lead after it leaves his or her premises, you may want to look elsewhere. A responsible breeder is committed to making a good match between prospective owners and the dogs in their care; that's the kind of person you want on your side as you make the journey into dog ownership.



Bronwyn Carlton ©AKC



If a home visit is scheduled with the breeder, ask to see at least one of the parents (the dam or the sire) of your puppy. See how the dogs in your breeder's home interact with your breeder. Are they friendly and outgoing or do they shy away?

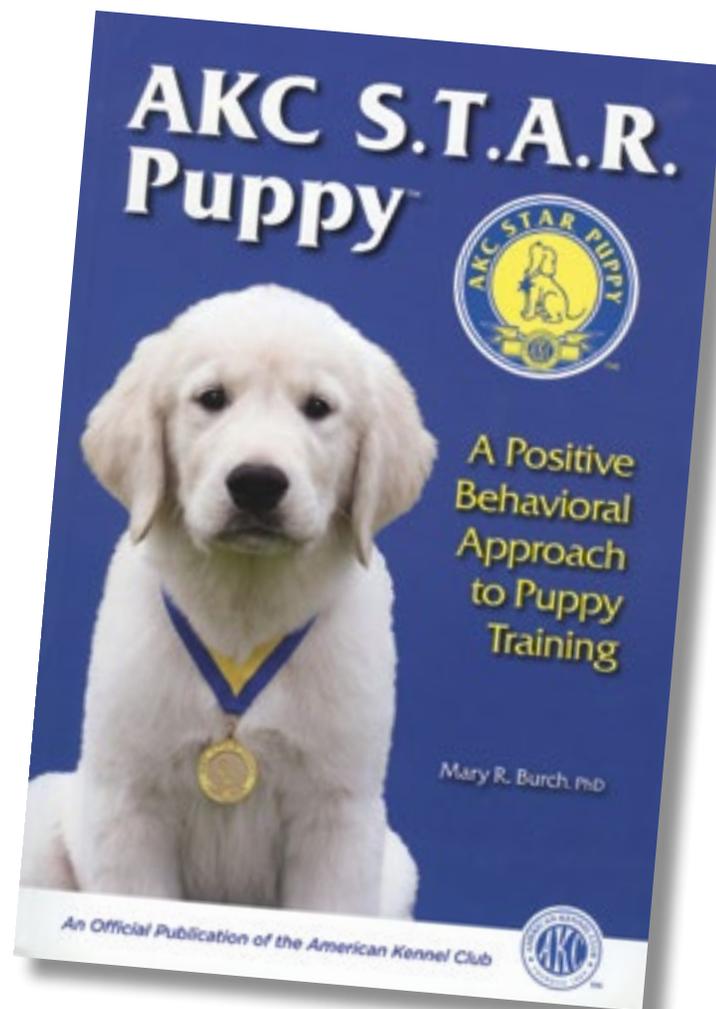


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AKC S.T.A.R. PUPPY

The AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program is an incentive program that encourages dog owners to take their puppies through a basic training class. Training classes teach you how to best communicate with your puppy. Organized training classes also provide an opportunity for your dog to socialize with other dogs. In classes aimed at earning the S.T.A.R. Puppy distinction, you'll be able to get information on all of your puppy-raising questions including housetraining, chewing, and the most effective way to teach practical skills such as coming when called. The S.T.A.R. Puppy Program, sponsored by The Hartford, is a natural lead-in to the AKC Canine Good Citizen Program.



CANINE GOOD CITIZEN PROGRAM

Many dog owners choose AKC's Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Program as the first step in training their dogs. The CGC Program lays the foundation for other AKC activities such as obedience, agility, tracking, and performance events. As you work with your dog to teach the CGC skills, you'll discover the many benefits and joys of training your dog. Training will enhance the bond between you and your dog. Dogs having a solid obedience education respond well to household routines, have good manners in the presence of people and other dogs, and they fully enjoy the company of the owner who took the time to provide training, intellectual stimulation, and a high quality life. We sincerely hope that CGC will be only a beginning for you and your dog and that after passing the CGC test, you'll continue training in obedience, agility, tracking, or performance events.



Mary Bloom ©AKC





THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

WHO AND WHAT WE ARE:

The AKC is a not-for-profit organization and the largest purebred dog registry in the world. We are the sports-governing body for over 22,000 dog events a year, including conformation (dog shows) and exciting sports like agility, obedience, rally, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog, herding trials, among others.



THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

But the AKC is so much more! Here are just some of the ways we support and enrich the lives of dogs—purebreds and mixed-breeds alike—and their families. We:

- Created the [AKC Humane Fund](#), which supports breed rescue activities, assists shelters that permit domestic-abuse victims to bring their pets, and educates dog lovers about responsible dog ownership.
- Offer the [Canine Good Citizen®](#) program: A 10-step test that certifies dogs who have good manners at home and in their community. Over 725,000 dogs across the United States have become Canine Good Citizens, and 42 states have passed resolutions recognizing the program's merit and importance.
- Founded [AKC Reunite](#), which has brought more than 400,000 lost pets back together with their owners.
- Created the [AKC Canine Health Foundation](#), which funds research projects and clinical studies. Since 1995 the AKC has donated over \$24 million to the CHF. (The AKC is the only registry that incorporates health-screening results into its permanent dog records.)
- Conduct thousands of kennel inspections annually to monitor care and conditions at kennels across the country and ensure the integrity of the AKC registry.
- Offer the largest, most comprehensive set of DNA programs for parentage verification and genetic identity to ensure reliable registration records.
- Support one of the world's largest collections of dog-related fine art and artifacts at the [AKC Museum of the Dog](#), and we have the world's largest [dog library](#) at AKC headquarters in New York, both of which are open to the public.



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THANK YOU FOR READING!

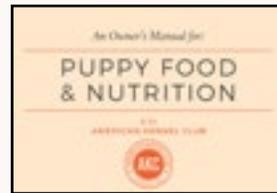
We hope this information was valuable to you in helping your puppy live a long, healthy, happy life. Below, find additional books in our Owner's Manual series designed to strengthen the bond between you and your furry family member.



THE FIVE COMMANDS EVERY DOG SHOULD KNOW



CRATE TRAINING



PUPPY FOOD & NUTRITION



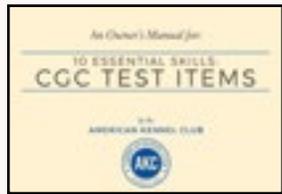
PUPPY SOCIALIZATION



WHY DOES MY DOG DO THAT?



WHAT'S HE THINKING?



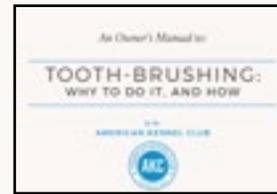
10 ESSENTIAL SKILLS: CGC TEST ITEMS



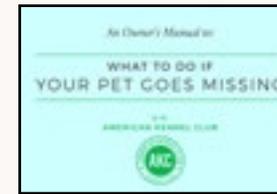
FIVE TRICKS YOU'LL WANT TO SHOW OFF



THE ALL-PURPOSE GROOMING TOOL KIT



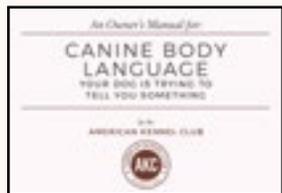
TOOTH-BRUSHING: WHY TO DO IT, AND HOW



WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PET GOES MISSING



WHAT ARE ALL THESE VACCINES?



CANINE BODY LANGUAGE: YOUR DOG IS TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING



TRAINING WITH TREATS



PUPPY POINTERS: TIPS FOR SELECTING A CANINE COMPANION



MOVING WITH YOUR PETS